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Intergroup structure and identity management among ethnic minority and majority groups: The interactive effects of perceived stability, legitimacy, and permeability

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Abstract

This paper is an examination, in a natural setting, of the interactive effects of perceived stability, legitimacy, and group permeability on group identification, stereotypes, and group feelings among Turkish-Dutch and ethnically Dutch participants. The findings strongly support predictions derived from the social identity perspective. For the Turkish-Dutch, a legitimate interethnic structure meant rather unstable relations and permeable group boundaries. For the Dutch, the same structure implied stability and impermeability. For the Turkish-Dutch, a response pattern of individual mobility was found: if they viewed ethnic intergroup relations as legitimate and stable, permeability was negatively related to Turkish identification as well as to less stereotyping on the dimension defining Turkish identity. It was also related positively to Dutch identification and in-group bias in relation to other ethnic minority groups. For the Dutch participants, higher perceived legitimacy was associated with stronger in-group identification and more positive in-group evaluation. Additionally, in a legitimate context, stability was, for them, related to a lower stereotyping of the Turkish out-group on status-relevant dimensions and more negative feelings towards ethnic out-groups in general.

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Social identity theory (SIT, Tajfel & Turner, 1979) provides a contextual framework for understanding intergroup relations among high- and low-status groups. The theory proposes that the operation of cognitive and motivational processes depends on ideological and structural features of the social world (Reicher, 2004; Turner, 1999). The cognitive process of social categorization and the striving for positive distinctiveness that motivate identity management strategies can explain *why* people show, for example, competitive in-group favoritism but do not explain *when* people show such favoritism, and *how* people show social competition (Rubin & Hewstone, 2004). SIT specifies three sociostructural variables that, interactively, would influence people's responses to status hierarchies. Specifically, beliefs about the stability and legitimacy of the status system and the nature of the group boundaries

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would affect people's responses and strategies for group differentiation. *Stability* refers to the extent to which group positions are considered to be changeable, and *legitimacy* refers to the extent to which the status structure is accepted as legitimate. *Permeability* refers to the extent to which individual group members can leave one group and join another. Perceived stability, legitimacy, and permeability would, interactively, determine the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses to the intergroup context and the strategies to pursue positive distinctiveness. However, Tajfel (1981) emphasized that these sociostructural variables and processes always manifest themselves within a specific historical, political, and ideological context. The way that people see themselves and others around them cannot be understood without taking the broader social context into consideration (Turner, 1999).

The research described in this article examines the interactive associations of the three sociostructural variables with group identification, stereotypes, and ethnic group evaluations among ethnic minority and majority group students living in the Netherlands. In the 1980s, this country adopted a policy of multiculturalism. However, since the beginning of the 21st century much has changed (Entzinger, 2003). Multiculturalism has, increasingly, become highly controversial, and has been defined in public debates as a "debacle," "outdated," and "dead" (Scroggins, 2005). In the last 5–6 years, there has been a clear shift away from multiculturalism to assimilation of minority groups (see Joppke, 2004; Verkuyten & Zaremba, 2005). The ideology of multiculturalism that offers ethnic minority groups the possibility of cultural maintenance and obtaining higher social status has been replaced by increased assimilationist thinking which provides intellectual and moral justification for the superiority and unchanging character of the dominant identity and culture (Fredrickson, 1999).

The study focuses on high-status majority (ethnically Dutch) and low-status minority group members (Turkish-Dutch). The Turks together with the Moroccans are the least accepted of all ethnic groups in Dutch society (Hagendoorn, 1995) and have on average the worst socio-economic and educational positions. In addition, research has consistently found statistically significant stronger support for multiculturalism among ethnic minorities (predominantly Turkish-Dutch participants) than among the Dutch majority group. The scores for the former group indicate a clear positive attitude towards multiculturalism whereas the latter group members display a more neutral attitude toward multiculturalism and tend to favor assimilation (e.g., Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2003; Breugelmans & Van de Vijver, 2004; Van Oudenhoven, Prins, & Buunk, 1998; Verkuyten & Brug, 2004; Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2006). Hence, both groups have a different position in the social structure and differ in terms of the favored ethnic group-based ideology.

This particular intergroup context allows us to go beyond a "mechanistic" reading of SIT in which perceived sociostructural characteristics are "simply" taken to lead to identity management strategies, independently of the content of group identities and the way that the intergroup situation is understood. A social identity account, however, means that predictions regarding relations among sociostructural characteristics, group identification, stereotypes and group evaluations have to take the particular ideological situation into consideration (Turner & Reynolds, 2001). We examined whether the two ethnic groups differ in how they perceive and understand these sociocultural characteristics. We further examined whether perceived stability, legitimacy, and permeability predict identity management responses of the two groups of participants. There is a lack of research that simultaneously examines the role of these sociocultural characteristics among different groups (see Bettencourt, Dorr, Charlton, & Hume, 2001, for a review). Research has not yet been done to examine the higher order interactions among perceptions of these characteristics and among different status groups. Furthermore, empirical studies have examined the impact of the perceived sociostructural variables on in-group identification (e.g., Ellermers, Van Knippenberg, & Wilke, 1990), stereotypes (e.g., Stott & Drury, 2004), and group evaluations (e.g., Lalonde & Silverman, 1994), but few, if any, have examined these dependent variables simultaneously. In addition, to our knowledge no studies have focused on out-group identification and on the evaluation of multiple out-groups. Therefore, this study examines the

sociostructural variables in relation to (in- and out-) group identification, stereotypes, and the evaluation of multiple ethnic out-groups.

STABILITY, LEGITIMACY, AND PERMEABILITY

It is likely that high- and low-status group members have different perceptions of the intergroup structure. The meaning and consequences of stability, legitimacy, and permeability can be expected to depend on the position of one's own group within the social structure. For example, permeable group boundaries may imply possibilities for upward social mobility for disadvantaged groups, but may present threats to in-group identity for the dominant group. Similarly, for low-status groups, stable and legitimate status relations can mean a lack of opportunity for collective action, whereas for dominant groups it signifies security.

However, not only the status positions in a social structure are important but also the ideological frameworks in which these positions and structure are understood. Perceived sociostructural characteristics can be closely related to interethnic ideologies. Assimilationist thinking, for example, is implicitly based on the idea that existing unequal status positions are legitimate and that individual improvement is possible and therefore that group boundaries are permeable. Considering the ethnic group difference in the support for multiculturalism and assimilation (see above), the Turkish-Dutch, compared to the Dutch participants, were expected to score higher on perceived stability and lower on perceived legitimacy and permeability of group boundaries (H1).

It is also possible that the associations between perceived stability, legitimacy, and permeability differ for both ethnic groups. Tajfel (1981) has argued that the sociostructural characteristics of intergroup relations will not be independent of each other. Particularly, he argued for a close association between stability and legitimacy. An unstable system would more likely be seen as illegitimate and a stable situation as legitimate. In their meta-analysis, Bettencourt et al. (2001) did indeed find that stability and legitimacy variables were highly correlated ($r = 0.61$), whereas there were no statistically reliable associations with permeability. However, Mummendey, Klink, Mielke, Wenzel, and Blanz (1999) found that among lower status East Germans in the context of East and West Germany, group permeability was negatively related to stability and positively to legitimacy, and that stability and legitimacy were independent of each other. Mummendey et al. argue that these results should be understood in light of the official non-conflictual assimilation ideology underlying German reunification.

Hence, how a legitimate intergroup structure is perceived seems to depend on the social and ideological position from which the relations are considered. For example, a situation in which group positions are seen as difficult to change could be considered adequate and just by high-status ethnic groups, but not by disadvantaged ethnic group members. For the latter, a legitimate intergroup structure probably means a situation in which an alternative status position for the group as a whole is feasible and individual group membership is alterable. Thus, for high-status groups, legitimacy can be expected to mean stable relations and rather impermeable group boundaries, whereas for low-status groups, it can mean rather unstable relations and more permeable boundaries (H2). It is these relationships that we expected in the current study.

LOW-STATUS GROUPS

Tajfel (1981) was particularly interested in low status, stigmatized, and disadvantaged groups such as ethnic minority groups. Membership in these kinds of groups confers a negative identity and instigate

identity management strategies (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Depending on the nature of the social structure, members of low-status groups adopt different strategies to achieve a more positive social identity. The most basic way in which this can be done is to follow an individualistic social mobility path and dissociate oneself from the devalued in-group (Taylor & McKirnan, 1984; Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). As Tajfel and Turner (1979, p. 43) argue, "individual mobility implies a disidentification with the erstwhile in-group" and, it can be added, an increased identification with the higher status out-group. This strategy presupposes that the group boundaries are seen as relatively permeable, indicating that membership in the high-status group can be achieved. Several studies have demonstrated that low-status group members do indeed distance themselves from their in-group when group boundaries are considered permeable (e.g., Boen & Vanbeselaere, 2000; Ellemers, Van Knippenberg, De Vries, & Wilke, 1988; Jackson, Sullivan, Harnish, & Hodge, 1996; Lalonde & Silverman, 1994; Mummendey et al., 1999; Wright et al., 1990).

However, this individual strategy is especially likely when the status differences are perceived as stable and legitimate. Under these conditions, collective strategies to achieve positive social identity are more difficult, making individual strategies more likely. Hence, for the Turkish-Dutch participants, we expected a three-way interaction effect between stability, legitimacy, and permeability. Specifically, we expected an individual mobility response pattern, that is, beliefs about permeability were expected to be associated with lower in-group identification, but only when the status structure was perceived as stable and legitimate (H3a).

An individual mobility strategy implies that group members try to leave their low-status group and gain access to the higher status group. Hence, an appropriate test implies not only that in-group identification should be examined but also the felt connection to the majority group. Guimond, Dif, and Aupy (2002) demonstrated that the individual mobility strategy of low-status group members implied increased identification with the high-status group. Many ethnic minority group members have a dual identity (see Hutnik, 1991; Verkuyten, 2005a). They consider themselves to be a member of their minority group as well as the national category. Hence, they define themselves, for example, as Turkish-Dutch, Indian-British, or African-American. This means that for the Turkish-Dutch participants, we also can examine the degree of Dutch identification. Following the idea of individual mobility, we expected higher perceived permeability to be associated with stronger Dutch identification, but, again, only when perceived stability and legitimacy are relatively high (H3b).

The distancing from the in-group probably also implies that people become less positive about in-group defining traits and attributes (Guimond et al., 2002). Self-categorization theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) argues that sociostructural and ideological conditions affect the relationship between groups and stereotyping. According to the theory, there is an interrelationship between stereotyping and the nature of the surrounding intergroup context (Haslam, Turner, Oakes, Reynolds, & Doosje, 2002). Reynolds, Oakes, Haslam, Nolan, and Dolnik (2000), for example, found that low-status participants created relatively positive stereotypes of the high-status group under the condition of perceived mobility. In conditions of perceived impermeability, however, relatively negative out-group stereotypes were found. Similarly, among low-status participants, Stott and Drury (2004) found relatively positive conceptions of the out-group in permeable conditions, whereas in impermeable conditions, the out-group was perceived more negatively and the in-group more positively.

Among low-status group members, permeable group boundaries in combination with a stable and legitimate intergroup situation can be expected to result in less positive in-group stereotypes, particularly those that are irrelevant to the status structure and self-defining for the low-status in-group. Hence, for in-group stereotyping on the dimension defining Turkish identity, the same three-way interaction effect was expected (H3c).

For status-relevant comparison dimensions, Bettencourt et al. (2001) found support for SIT's prediction that reduced legitimacy of the social system may lead low-status group members to adopt a competitive strategy. Illegitimacy of status differences questions the validity of the high-status groups' relative standing on status-relevant dimensions. It allows minority group members to try to establish positive distinctiveness on dimensions that define the status structure. Competitive social comparisons are even more likely when the status structure is also seen as unstable. For example, Turner and Brown (1978) demonstrated that for low-status groups, in-group favoritism was strongest when the status difference was perceived as illegitimate and unstable. Hence, in an unstable context, perceived illegitimacy can be expected to be associated with more positive in-group stereotypes on the status-related dimension. Thus, we expected an interaction effect between stability and legitimacy for the Turkish-Dutch participants in predicting in-group stereotyping on the status-relevant dimension (H4).

SIT argues that under identity threatening circumstances, people will try to restore a positive and distinct social identity, for example, by direct competition with the higher status majority group. It is also possible to adopt socially creative strategies as outlined by Tajfel and Turner (1979). One of these strategies is to make social comparisons with other minority groups that have similar status. In most real-life situations there is, typically, more than one ethnic minority group. This means that minority group members are simultaneously confronted with out-groups of equal and unequal status (Verkuyten, 2005b). A similarity in circumstances and minority position interferes with one's distinctiveness and enhances the likelihood that other minority groups function as comparison standards. Thus to enhance the value and distinctiveness of their in-group, group members can distance themselves or derogate other minority out-groups. In three experiments among disadvantaged group members, Rothgerber and Worchel (1997), demonstrated, for example, that disadvantaged out-groups can become comparison groups for disadvantaged in-groups. They found that when an disadvantaged out-group performs increasingly positive, it is accorded more attention, is seen as more homogenous, and is harmed more.

To our knowledge, researchers have not examined how perceived sociostructural characteristics affect ethnic minority group members' evaluation of other low-status minority groups. However, it is likely that an individual mobility strategy implies a more negative evaluation of other minority groups. This means that we can expect the same three-way interaction effect between stability, legitimacy, and permeability. Permeable group boundaries can be expected to be associated with less positive evaluation of minority out-groups, but only when the status structure is perceived as stable and legitimate (H3d). Under these conditions, individual strategies to achieve positive identity are more likely than collective strategies based, for example, on sharing a common predicament and "majority enemy" that would lead to a heightened perception of similarity and increased attraction.

HIGH-STATUS GROUPS

Social identity theory concentrates on subordinate groups and the situation for high-status group members is not as clearly specified (but see Ellemers, 1993; Leach, Snider, & Iyer, 2002). For advantaged group members, the focus is more on status protection than on individual mobility strategies. Membership in a high-status group contributes to a positive social identity and people can be expected to want to protect and preserve their dominant status position. Because permeability is threatening, it can be argued that status protection reactions are likely to be stronger when group boundaries are considered permeable (Bettencourt et al., 2001).

The same reasoning can be applied to illegitimacy: it is threatening when one's status position is perceived as illegitimate, making status protection reactions more likely. However, illegitimate in-group advantage has also been found to induce feelings of collective guilt among high-status group

members (Miron, Branscombe, & Schmitt, 2006), and these feelings lead to positive out-group perceptions and behaviors (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998). Hence, it is possible to argue that people who feel that their higher status is deserved or justified, rather than illegitimate, will be more likely to react to threat by increased in-group identification and positive in-group favoritism. In their study of White Australians, Johnson, Terry, and Louis (2005), for example, demonstrated that perceived legitimacy was associated with higher anti-Asian stereotyping and prejudice. Turner & Brown (1978) showed that, regardless of stability, high-status groups demonstrated positive in-group favoritism when the status difference was seen as legitimate. Further, in their meta-analysis, Bettencourt et al. (2001) found that high-status groups are more biased when status relations are perceived as legitimate. Perceived legitimacy justifies people's reactions to threat and warrants the social claims implied in group identification and in-group favoritism. Hence, for the Dutch participants, perceived legitimacy can be expected to be positively related to in-group identification and to in-group favoritism (H5).

These effects for legitimacy can be a function of the perceived stability of the intergroup relations (Bettencourt et al., 2001; Johnson et al., 2005). An unstable and illegitimate status structure is threatening for high-status groups making them more strongly motivated to protect their in-group identity. However, stable and legitimate status differences also make it easier to claim and justify superiority, particularly on the status-relevant dimension. System justification theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994) argues, for example, that stereotypes can justify the status quo and self-categorization theory (Haslam et al., 2002) stresses that stereotypes represent the existing intergroup context. In the present study, we will explore the possible interactions between stability and legitimacy on the perceptions and evaluations of the Dutch participants.

THE CURRENT STUDY

The following expectations derived from our discussion will be examined.

H1: Compared to the Dutch, ethnic minority participants were expected to perceive the intergroup structure as more stable and less legitimate, and the group boundaries as less permeable.

H2: We predict that the associations among the three sociostructural characteristics will be different for both groups. In particular, for the Dutch participants, perceived legitimacy was expected to be positively associated with stability and negatively with permeability. In contrast, for the Turkish-Dutch, perceived legitimacy was expected to be negatively related to stability and positively to permeability.

H3: The Turkish-Dutch participants were expected to adopt an individual mobility strategy under perceived stability and legitimacy condition. Hence, under this condition, permeability was expected to be related negatively to in-group identification (H3a) and positively to Dutch identification (H3b), as well as to less positive in-group stereotypes on the status unrelated dimension (H3c), and less positive feelings towards ethnic minority out-groups (H3d).

H4: For the status-related dimension, the Turkish-Dutch participants were expected to show more positive in-group stereotypes under the condition of perceived instability and illegitimacy.

H5: For the Dutch participants, no individual mobility response pattern was expected. Rather, the perception of legitimacy was expected to predict stronger in-group identification, less positive in-group stereotypes on the status-irrelevant dimension, and more positive stereotypes on the status-

relevant dimension and on the affective ratings. Similar effects were expected for perceived permeability. It was explored whether these main effects differ for low and high perceived stability.

METHOD

Sample

The study was conducted in 2004 with 288 student participants. The students were recruited with the help of schools and student organizations. The students were asked to participate in a study on perceptions of current inter-ethnic relations in the Netherlands. There were 149 participants who described themselves as ethnically Turkish and had two Turkish parents, and 139 participants who described themselves as ethnically Dutch and had parents of Dutch origin. There were 141 females and 147 males; the gender distribution was similar for both ethnic groups. The ages ranged from 16 to 25 and the mean age of the Turkish-Dutch participants ($M = 20.21$, $SD = 2.48$) was higher than that of the Dutch ones ($M = 17.94$, $SD = 0.80$), $t(288) = 15.01$, $p < 0.001$. All Turkish-Dutch participants had been living for more than 10 years in the Netherlands and the mean number of years of residence was 19.2.

Measures

Perceived stability and legitimacy of ethnic group relations and perceived permeability were measured by nine items adapted from Mummendey et al. (1999). The items for stability and permeability have been used in a previous Dutch study (Verkuyten, 2005b). The items were measured on scales ranging from 1 (disagree strongly) to 7 (agree strongly). Principal components analysis with varimax rotation on these nine items yielded a three-factor structure. The first factor explained 35% of the variance, the second one explained 22%, and the third factor explained 11%. The three items intended to measure perceived stability (e.g., "The current relationship between autochthones [ethnically Dutch] and allochthones [ethnic minorities] will remain stable for the next years") had a high load on the first factor (>0.74) and a low load on the other factors (<0.34). On the second factor, the three legitimacy items (e.g., "It is justified, that the autochthones have higher status and prestige than the allochthones") had a high load (>0.75), with a load of less than 0.11 on the other factors. The three permeability items (e.g., "No matter what effort allochthones make, they will never become Dutch") loaded on the third factor (>0.65) and with a highest load of 0.29 on the first factor. The terms "autochthones" and "allochthones" were used because these are the ones that are prevalent in public discourse in the Netherlands. For the perceived stability scale, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.84$, for legitimacy, $\alpha = 0.77$ and for permeability $\alpha = 0.75$. Higher scores mean higher perceived stability, legitimacy, and permeability, respectively. Principal components analyses and reliability analyses for the Turkish-Dutch and Dutch participants separately yielded similar results.

In-group identification was assessed by means of six items. The items measure the importance attached to one's ethnic background and are similar to items on Phinney's (1992) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure. The items were measured on scales ranging from 1 (disagree strongly) to 7 (agree strongly). Three sample items are "My ethnic identity is an important part of myself, I identify with my ethnic group," and "I have a strong sense of belonging to my ethnic group." Cronbach's α was 0.93.

Out-group identification among the Turkish-Dutch participants was measured with three items using the same seven-point scales. The items were, "I identify with Dutch people," "I feel that I am Dutch," "Being Dutch is an important part of how I see myself." Cronbach's α was 0.89.

Attribute ratings were used to measure group stereotypes. The participants were asked to indicate the percentage (0% to 100%) of Dutch and Turks who possessed each attribute. Hence, participants judged both target groups on the same set of attribute dimensions. Based on previous Dutch studies, we chose five positive attributes that are not directly related to the social status hierarchy in society and that have been found to be considered as being more characteristic of the culture of the Turkish group than of the ethnically Dutch (e.g., Dagevos, Gijsberts, & Van Praag, 2003; Phaet, Van Lotringen, & Entzinger, 2000; Verkuyten, 2005b). These were hospitable, tradition minded, family-oriented, faithful, and respectful towards the elderly. Additionally, the participants were presented with five positive attributes that are more directly related to the social status distinction and more relevant to the ethnic Dutch. These were efficient, achievement-oriented, disciplined, successful, and persevering.

Principal-component analysis on the trait attributes yielded two factors that explained 48% and 26% of the variance respectively. The five attributes that were assumed to be irrelevant to the status distinction and more stereotypical for the Turks loaded on the first factor and the other five attributes assumed to be relevant and more stereotypical of the ethnic Dutch loaded on the second factor. For each target group, composite measures were computed for the first and the last five attributes. For our present purposes, the former measure was labeled as the status-irrelevant dimension of group stereotypes (Verkuyten, 2005a). The second was labeled as the status-relevant dimension.

In order to measure general group feelings, the participants were given the well-known "feeling thermometer." This thermometer has been used successfully in different studies of both ethnic majority and minority group participants, including in the Netherlands (e.g., Dijker, 1987; Verkuyten, 2005b). It is intended as a global measure of in-group and out-group attitudes. Following the instruction, five groups were listed: Turks, Surinamese, Dutch, Moroccans, and Antilleans. The participants were asked to indicate on the thermometer whether they had positive or negative feelings about each group using a scale ranging from 0 degrees to 100 degree.

RESULTS

The results are presented in five sections. After the preliminary analyses, the focus is on ethnic group differences on the various measures, and, then, on their intercorrelations. Subsequently, the effects of perceived stability, legitimacy, and permeability on group identification will be examined. Then, the effects of these variables on the status-relevant and irrelevant trait dimensions will be presented. Finally, the results for the group feelings will be discussed.

Preliminary Analyses

Preliminary analysis did not indicate any statistically significant differences for gender. Males and females had similar scores for the different measures. Furthermore, because the Turkish-Dutch sample was somewhat older than the Dutch one, we examined age differences for the various measures. No systematic age differences were found. In addition, for the Turkish-Dutch participants, the different measures were not significantly related to length of residence in the country, or to migration age. Therefore, data were collapsed across males and females, ages, and time periods.

We also examined whether the participants recognized the relative standings of the Dutch majority group (autochthones) and ethnic minorities (allochthones). The participants were asked whether there

is a great difference in social position and status between both categories. Using a seven-point scale, the mean scores were on the “agree-side” of the scale and similar for the Dutch and the Turkish-Dutch participants ($M = 5.50$, $SD = 0.88$, and $M = 5.52$, $SD = 1.27$), $t(287) = 0.13$, $p < 0.10$. Hence, both groups agreed that in Dutch society, the ethnic minority groups have lower status positions than the majority group.

Mean Scores for Legitimacy, Stability, and Permeability

Means and standard deviations for the two groups of participants separately are presented in Table 1. As expected, the Turkish-Dutch participants had a significantly lower score (seven-point scales) for legitimacy and for permeability than the Dutch, and a higher score for stability. Thus compared to the ethnically Dutch, the Turkish-Dutch perceived the intergroup situation as illegitimate and more stable, and considered the group boundaries as rather impermeable.

In addition, the mean overall scores (seven-point scales) for perceived stability ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 1.36$), permeability ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.43$), and legitimacy ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.31$) indicate that the intergroup relations were considered relatively stable and impermeable, and also as rather illegitimate.

Legitimacy, Stability, and Permeability

Table 2 contains the associations among the three sociostructural variables and for the two groups of participants. All associations are significant and perceived stability is negatively related to perceived permeability for both groups. The association is, however, stronger for the Turkish-Dutch (-0.58) than the Dutch participants (-0.31), $z = 2.87$, $p < 0.01$. In addition, and as expected, for the Turkish-Dutch participants, legitimacy is negatively related to stability (-0.45) and positively to permeability (0.37). In contrast, for the ethnic Dutch, legitimacy is positively related to stability (0.37) and negatively to permeability (-0.34). These associations are reliably different between the groups,

Table 1. Means, and standard deviations for the different measures for the ethnically Dutch and the Turkish-Dutch participants

	<i>Dutch</i>		<i>Turkish-Dutch</i>		<i>t</i> -value
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Legitimacy	3.10	1.42	2.35	1.09	4.96**
Stability	4.31	1.10	5.02	1.14	3.82**
Permeability	4.04	1.26	2.86	1.34	7.68**
In-group identification	3.90	1.49	5.51	1.19	10.14**
Status-relevant in-group	71.3	9.5	72.7	16.5	0.93
Status-relevant out-group	50.7	16.6	70.3	12.0	11.25**
Status-irrelevant in-group	58.1	10.1	87.9	8.8	26.83**
Status-irrelevant out-group	78.0	8.8	43.0	13.0	26.77**
In-group feelings	78.9	17.2	87.8	11.7	5.13**
Out-group feelings	46.9	19.6	64.4	16.5	8.16**

** $p < 0.001$.

Table 2. Pearson-product moment correlation coefficients between different measures

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Legitimacy	—	0.37**	-0.34**	0.34**	0.03	-0.31**	0.20*	-0.28**	0.32**	-0.42**
2. Stability	-0.45**	—	-0.31**	0.14	0.04	-0.35**	-0.04	-0.20*	0.12	-0.32**
3. Permeability	0.37**	-0.58**	—	0.15	0.01	0.02	-0.07	0.15	0.09	-0.12
4. In-group identification	-0.37**	0.51**	0.47**	—	0.37**	-0.07	0.37**	-0.04	0.47**	-0.30**
5. Status-relevant in-group	-0.35**	0.48**	-0.53**	0.51**	—	0.19	0.33**	0.23*	0.37**	0.06
6. Status-relevant out-group	0.29**	0.08	-0.13	0.07	0.02	—	0.15	0.43**	-0.06	0.38**
7. Status-irrelevant in-group	-0.28**	0.45**	-0.31**	0.55**	0.56**	0.06	—	0.21*	0.31**	0.13
8. Status-irrelevant out-group	0.13	0.14	-0.19	0.04	0.29**	0.39**	0.01	—	0.01	0.31**
9. In-group feelings	-0.15	0.33**	-0.22**	0.32**	0.45**	-0.02	0.47**	0.05	—	-0.11
10. Out-group feelings	-0.21**	0.03	0.07	-0.12	-0.05	0.42**	-0.15	0.32**	0.11	—

Note: Ethnically Dutch participants above the diagonal and Turkish-Dutch participants below the diagonal.

* $p < 0.01$.

** $p < 0.001$.

$z = 7.33$, $p < 0.001$, and $z = 6.23$, $p < 0.001$, respectively. Hence, for the Turkish-Dutch, a legitimate ethnic intergroup structure seems to imply changeable relations and permeable group boundaries, whereas for the ethnically Dutch legitimate interethnic relations imply a relatively stable structure with impermeable boundaries. This pattern of results indicates that a legitimate social system has contrasting meanings for the Turkish-Dutch and the ethnically Dutch participants. For the former, it is associated with openness and change, and for the latter with closeness and stability. Because of these different meanings, all subsequent analyses were carried out separately for Turkish-Dutch and Dutch participants.

Group Identification

As shown in Table 1, in-group identification (seven-point scale) was significantly higher for the Turkish-Dutch than for the Dutch participants, $t(286) = 10.14$, $p < 0.001$. This difference is in agreement with various other studies conducted in the Netherlands (see Verkuyten, 2005a). In addition, for the Turkish-Dutch participants, Turkish group identification was negatively related to Dutch identification, $r = -0.29$, $p < 0.001$, and their mean score for Dutch identification was 3.46 ($SD = 1.57$).

Multiple regression analysis was used for examining whether the sociostructural variables predict in-group identification among the *Turkish-Dutch participants*. In all regression analyses, the centered scores for the three sociostructural predictor measures were entered as well as all the higher order interactions. The full model explains no less than 39% of the variance in Turkish identification, $F(7, 149) = 12.39$, $p < 0.001$. The independent effects of legitimacy, stability, and permeability were all three significant. The three two-way interactions also made a significant contribution to the prediction of Turkish identification. These effects were in turn qualified by a significant three-way interaction effect ($\beta = -0.38$, $p < 0.001$). Simple slope analyses demonstrated that when the intergroup context was considered stable and relatively legitimate, permeability was negatively related to Turkish identification ($\beta = -0.63$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, in this context and in line with the prediction, perceived permeable group boundaries was related to less ethnic in-group identification.

When the context was seen as less stable but relatively legitimate, permeability was not reliably related to Turkish identification ($\beta = -0.13$, $p > 0.10$). Under conditions of low legitimacy, perceptions of permeability were also not significantly linked to in-group identification in either stable contexts ($\beta = 0.02$, $p > 0.10$) or unstable contexts ($\beta = -0.27$, $p > 0.10$).

The results for Dutch identification among the Turkish-Dutch participants showed that the regression model accounted for 30% of the variance, $F(7, 149) = 8.28$, $p < 0.001$. Perceived permeability had a strong positive main effect on Dutch identification ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$). Dutch identification is higher when it is considered more possible to leave one's minority group and join the majority group. This effect was qualified, however, by a significant three-way interaction effect ($\beta = -0.32$, $p < 0.01$). Simple slope analyses indicated again that in a stable and legitimate context, permeability was positively related to Dutch identification ($\beta = 0.51$, $p < 0.001$). For the other combinations of stability and legitimacy, no statistically significant associations between perceived permeability and Dutch identification were found ($ps > 0.10$).

The regression model predicting in-group identification for the *Dutch participants* accounted for 16% of the variance in identification, $F(7, 139) = 3.39$, $p < 0.05$. Perceived legitimacy had an independent positive effect ($\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.05$). Hence, in-group identification was higher the more the status differences were seen as legitimate. Stability and permeability had no statistically significant effects and there were no statistically significant interaction effects.

Stereotype Dimensions

We first examined whether the participants saw the status-irrelevant dimension as more stereotypical for the Turks, and the status-relevant dimension as more stereotypical for the Dutch. A repeated measures MANOVA was conducted with the four group stereotypes (in-group and out-group status-irrelevant and relevant) as a repeated measures factor. Ethnic group was the between-subjects factor. The analysis yielded a statistically significant main-effect for group stereotypes, $F(3, 288) = 11.82$, $p < 0.001$, which was qualified by an interaction effect with ethnic group, $F(3, 288) = 471.48$, $p < 0.001$. As shown in Table 1, both Turkish-Dutch, $t(148) = 34.61$, $p < 0.001$, and Dutch participants, $t(138) = 19.63$, $p < 0.001$, reported that the status-irrelevant dimension described a greater percentage of the Turks than the ethnic Dutch. In contrast, although the Dutch participants considered the status-relevant dimension as more stereotypical of the Dutch than the Turks, $t(138) = 13.62$, $p < 0.001$, the Turkish-Dutch participants did not make a distinction between both groups, $t(148) = 1.48$, $p > 0.10$.

Separate regression analyses were conducted for the two stereotype dimensions and for the Turkish-Dutch and Dutch participants. For the *Turkish-Dutch participants*, the full regression model with the status-irrelevant (in-group) dimension as the outcome variable explained a statistically significant amount of variance (32%), (for the out-group model, $R^2 = 0.06$, $F = 1.25$, $p > 0.10$). As shown in Table 3, the independent main effects of legitimacy (beta = -0.31) and stability (beta = 0.34) are statistically significant. The two-way interactions with permeability also made a statistically significant contribution to the prediction of in-group stereotypes on this dimension. These effects were in turn qualified by a significant three-way interaction effect. Simple slope analyses yielded the same pattern of results as for the group identifications. Hence, when the intergroup context was considered stable and relatively legitimate, permeability was negatively related to in-group stereotypes on the status-irrelevant dimension (beta = -0.51 , $p < 0.05$). Thus, in this context and in line with the prediction, perceived permeable group boundaries was related to less positive stereotypes of the ethnic in-group defining traits. When the context was seen as less stable but relatively legitimate, permeability was not reliably related to in-group stereotypes (beta 0.13 , $p > 0.10$). Under conditions of low legitimacy, perceptions of permeability were also not statistically significant linked to in-group stereotypes in either stable contexts (beta = -0.04 , $p > 0.10$) or unstable contexts (beta = 0.06 , $p > 0.10$).

Table 3. Hierarchical regression analyses with the status-irrelevant and relevant stereotype dimensions as dependent variables: Standardized regression coefficients (beta) for the Turkish-Dutch participants

	Status-irrelevant			Status-relevant					
	<i>In-group</i>			<i>In-group</i>			<i>Out-group</i>		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Legitimacy	-0.11	-0.13	-0.31**	-0.13	-0.12	-0.18	-0.28**	-0.28**	-0.26*
Stability	0.41**	0.37**	0.34**	0.21*	0.16	0.15	-0.11	-0.03	-0.03
Permeability	-0.12	-0.04	-0.12	-0.36**	-0.38**	-0.41**	-0.09	-0.05	-0.07
Leg \times stab.		0.07	-0.07		-0.12	-0.17		0.27**	0.24**
Leg \times per.		-0.13	-0.26*		0.12	0.07		-0.09	-0.08
Stab \times per		-0.26**	-0.31**		0.02	0.01		-0.07	-0.07
Leg \times stab \times per			-0.28*			-0.10			0.01
R^2 -change	0.24	0.05	0.03	0.34	0.04	0.01	0.08	0.07	0.00
F -change	14.9**	3.32*	6.09**	24.4**	2.96	0.87	3.87*	3.82*	0.01

* $p < 0.05$.

** $p < 0.01$.

For the status-relevant stereotype dimension, several statistical significant effects were found (see Table 3). Higher permeability was associated with less positive stereotypes of the in-group. In addition, perceived legitimacy was negatively related to out-group stereotypes. This effect was qualified by a significant interaction effect between stability and legitimacy. Simple slope analyses demonstrated that when the context was seen as relatively legitimate, perceived stability was positively related to the evaluation of the Dutch on the status-relevant dimension ($\beta = 0.33$, $p > 0.05$). In contrast, in an illegitimate context, stability was negatively related to out-group stereotypes ($\beta = -0.26$, $p < 0.05$).

The results of the regression analyses for the *Dutch participants* indicated that there was only one statistically significant predictor for the status-irrelevant dimensions. Higher perceived legitimacy was associated with more positive in-group stereotypes ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.01$), and less positive out-group stereotypes ($\beta = -0.23$, $p < 0.05$).

For the status-relevant dimension, there was an independent effect for perceived stability. Higher perceived stability was a predictor of more negative out-group stereotypes ($\beta = -0.35$, $p < 0.01$). The effect for stability was, however, qualified by a statistically significant interaction effect between stability and legitimacy ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.05$). When the status relations were seen as legitimate, perceived stability was negatively related to out-group stereotypes on this dimension ($\beta = -0.43$, $p < 0.001$). When the status relations were seen as more illegitimate, stability was not reliably related to out-group stereotypes ($\beta = -0.18$, $p > 0.05$).

Thermometer Measure

A repeated measures MANOVA was conducted for the thermometer questions in order to examine differences between the Turkish-Dutch and the ethnic Dutch participants. This was done with the five group evaluations (in-group, out-group, Moroccans, Surinamese, and Antilleans) as a repeated measures factor and ethnic group as the between-subjects factors. The analysis yielded a significant main effect for group evaluations, $F(4, 288) = 309.65$, $p < 0.001$. Participants evaluated their in-group most positively ($M = 83.5$, $SD = 15.2$), followed by the out-group ($M = 55.9$, $SD = 20.0$), the Surinamese ($M = 55.2$, $SD = 20.4$), the Antilleans ($M = 47.3$, $SD = 23.5$), and then the Moroccan group ($M = 37.6$, $SD = 24.1$). However, this effect was qualified by a significant interaction effect between group evaluation and ethnic group, $F(4, 288) = 44.97$, $p < 0.001$. Simple main effect analyses indicated significant ethnic group differences ($ps < 0.001$) for all group measures except for the evaluation of the Moroccans; this out-group was evaluated equally negatively by both the Dutch and the Turkish-Dutch participants. Compared to the Turkish-Dutch, the Dutch had lower mean scores for feelings towards the in-group and the Turkish (Dutch) out-group (see Table 1), and higher scores for feelings towards the Surinamese and the Antilleans. Hence, the Dutch were significantly less positive towards the in-group than the Turkish-Dutch were, and also less positive towards the Turks than the Turkish-Dutch were towards the Dutch. The Turkish-Dutch, however, evaluated the Surinamese and Antilleans more negatively than the Dutch.

For the *Turkish-Dutch* participants, the affective ratings of the three minority out-groups were strongly correlated and principal components analysis yielded one factor that explained 70% of the variance. Using the sum-score ($\alpha = 0.78$), we computed a measure of affective minority out-group rating, in addition to the rating for the Dutch out-group. The feelings towards the other ethnic minority groups ($M = 46.1$, $SD = 16.4$) was less positive than towards the Dutch ($M = 64.5$, $SD = 16.5$), $t(144) = 11.48$, $p < 0.001$.

The results for the regression analyses predicting the affective group ratings are shown in Table 4. Perceived stability had a positive main effect on in-group feelings. For the Dutch out-group, the results show a positive main effect for permeability. More permeable group boundaries was associated with a

Table 4. Multiple regression analysis with group feelings on the thermometer measure as dependent variables: Standardized regression coefficients (beta) for the Turkish-Dutch participants

	In-group			Dutch out-group			Minority out-groups		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Legitimacy	-0.01	0.07	0.10	-0.26**	-0.21*	-0.16	-0.18	-0.12	-0.34**
Stability	0.33**	0.37**	0.38**	0.01	0.14	0.14	0.10	0.17	0.14
Permeability	-0.03	-0.06	-0.04	0.19	0.21*	0.24*	-0.07	-0.07	-0.17
Leg \times stab.		0.20	0.22		0.22*	0.26*		0.15	-0.03
Leg \times per.		0.19	0.21		0.10	0.14		0.13	-0.05
Stab \times per		-0.05	-0.04		0.20*	0.21*		0.08	0.02
Leg \times stab \times per			0.06			0.08			-0.37**
R^2 -change	0.12	0.03	0.01	0.06	0.08	0.00	0.08	0.01	0.05
F -change	6.67**	1.51	0.19	3.13*	4.24**	0.37	3.83*	0.90	7.91**

* $p < 0.05$.** $p < 0.01$.

more positive evaluation of the Dutch out-group. In addition, there was a statistically significant interaction effect between stability and legitimacy on the Dutch out-group rating. Simple slope analyses demonstrated that when the intergroup context was seen as illegitimate, perceived stability was negatively related to feelings towards the Dutch ($\beta = -0.27$, $p < 0.05$). When the context was seen as more legitimate, stability was positively related to out-group feelings ($\beta = 0.23$, $p > 0.05$).

For the three minority out-groups, there was a negative effect for legitimacy that was, however, qualified by a statistically significant three-way interaction effect between stability, legitimacy, and permeability. Again, simple slope analyses demonstrated that when the intergroup context was considered stable and relatively legitimate, permeability was negatively related to minority out-group feelings ($\beta = -0.52$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, in this context, a more permeable group boundary with the majority group goes together with a more negative attitude towards other ethnic minority groups. For the other combinations of stability and legitimacy, no reliable and significant effects for permeability were found (all $ps > 0.05$).

For the Dutch participants, principal components analysis on the affective ratings of the four out-groups yielded one factor that explained 61% of the variance. Using a sum-score ($\alpha = 0.79$), we computed a measure of affective out-group rating. Regression analyses was used to examine the interactive effects of the sociostructural variables on in-group and out-group feelings. For out-group feelings, main negative effects for stability ($\beta = -0.37$, $p < 0.001$) and legitimacy ($\beta = -0.30$, $p < 0.001$) were found. These effects were qualified, however, by a significant interaction effect between stability and legitimacy ($\beta = -0.23$, $p < 0.05$). Simple slope analyses demonstrated that in a legitimate context, higher perceived stability was negatively related to feelings towards minority out-groups ($\beta = -0.35$, $p < 0.01$). In an illegitimate context, stability perceptions were not reliably related to out-group feelings ($\beta = -0.15$, $p > 0.05$). Legitimacy had, further, a main positive effect on in-group feelings ($\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.01$).

DISCUSSION

The social identity approach proposes that sociostructural variables interact to determine the identity management strategies that people adopt. According to the theory, interactions among perceived

stability, legitimacy, and permeability should be taken into account for understanding when people show individual mobility, social creativity, or social competition (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Furthermore, the particular identity management strategies also depend on the identity content and the ideological context (Turner, 1999; Turner & Reynolds, 2001). This study goes beyond existing research in three ways. First, it was examined whether the ethnic majority and minority group differ in their perceptions and meanings of the intergroup structure. Second, we examined the three sociostructural variables in relation to different identity management strategies, rather than only in relation to group identification (e.g., Ellemers et al., 1990), stereotypes (e.g., Stott & Drury, 2004), or group evaluations (e.g., Lalonde & Silverman, 1994). We focused on in-group and out-group identification, on status-relevant and irrelevant stereotype dimensions, and on feelings towards multiple out-groups. Third, to our knowledge research has not examined the combined effects of the three sociostructural variables on these strategies. Research has typically considered the variables either alone or in some combination, but not simultaneously and among high and low- status groups (see Bettencourt et al., 2001). The results of the current study, conducted among Turkish-Dutch and Dutch participants, offer strong support for SIT's predictions about the interactive effects of the three sociostructural variables on different identity management strategies.

Sociostructural Variables

Both groups of participants agreed that the Dutch have a higher status position than ethnic minorities. Further, both groups consistently report different ideological positions (assimilation vs. multiculturalism) on the question of ethnic diversity within Dutch society (e.g., Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2003; Breugelmans & Van de Vijver, 2004; Van Oudenhoven et al., 1998; Verkuyten & Brug, 2004; Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2006).¹ In agreement with these different social and ideological positions, both groups were found to differ in the perception and meaning of intergroup stability and legitimacy, and the permeability of group boundaries. Compared to the Dutch, the Turkish-Dutch participants saw the interethnic relations as more stable, less legitimate, and less permeable (see also Verkuyten, 2005b). Their mean scores for perceived stability were rather high and for legitimacy and permeability the scores were quite low. This indicates that the Turkish-Dutch considered the existing structure as relatively closed and difficult to change, and also as illegitimate. For them, a legitimate interethnic structure seems to mean rather unstable relations and permeable group boundaries. In contrast, for the ethnically Dutch, a legitimate structure means rather stable relations with relatively closed group boundaries. Hence, the results show that both groups perceive and interpret the interethnic structure quite differently. The Dutch seem to consider the status quo legitimate when the interethnic relations are not only stable but the ethnic boundaries are also clear and firm. In contrast, for the Turkish-Dutch participants, legitimacy means that a higher status position for ethnic minorities is possible.

The associations found differ from what Bettencourt et al. (2001) report in their meta-analysis. They indicate that only the stability and legitimacy variables are highly and positively correlated. Similar associations were discussed by Tajfel (1981), and, were also found for the Dutch participants. The other

¹Most of these studies have used the Dutch version of Berry and Kalin's (1995) Multicultural Ideology Scale. This version (with 14 items) was developed by Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver (2000) in their representative study of the Dutch population. Studies examining the factorial structure of multiculturalism in majority members have consistently found multiculturalism to be a unifactorial construct (see Breugelmans & Van de Vijver, 2004) with support for minority group cultural maintenance on one end and assimilation on the other. In the present study, we did not use this scale but we asked the participants to respond to the following question: "How important do you consider it to be to see and treat people as a member of their cultural group." On a seven-point scale, the Turkish-Dutch participants had a significantly higher score ($M = 5.51$, $SD = 1.38$) than the ethnic Dutch ($M = 3.5$, $SD = 1.41$), $t(286) = 9.45$, $p < 0.001$.

associations differ from the existing research. However, much of the research does not examine the associations for low-and high-status groups separately. In addition, most of the studies have been conducted in experimental settings in which the sociostructural variables are not highly correlated because they are manipulated as experimental factors (see Ellemers, 1993).

In natural intergroup settings other results have been found. Among low-status East Germans, for example, Mummendey et al. (1999) found similar associations as we did among the Turkish-Dutch. They explain these associations in terms of the assimilation ideology underlying German reunification. For the ethnically Dutch group, the relationship between legitimacy and closed stability is consistent with an assimilationist perspective that provides intellectual and moral justification for the superiority and unchanging character of the dominant identity and culture. In contrast, from a multicultural perspective, a legitimate society implies openness and equality and these associations were found for the Turkish-Dutch. Hence, and as proposed by the social identity perspective, the results can be interpreted as suggesting an important relationship between sociostructural characteristics and ideologies that endorse or question identities and group positions (Verkuyten, 2005b).

The Low-status Turkish-Dutch

According to SIT, collective action and social competition is not very likely when low-status group members regard the intergroup structure as secure (stable and legitimate). In such a situation, they are more likely to follow an individualistic path, depending on the degree to which the boundaries between the groups are seen as permeable. The present results clearly support this idea. For the Turkish-Dutch participants, several three-way interaction effects between stability, legitimacy, and permeability turned out to be significant. When the interethnic relations were considered as relatively secure, perceived permeability was associated with lower Turkish identification and less strong in-group stereotyping on the status-irrelevant dimension. Hence, in a stable and legitimate intergroup structure in which, however, a person's fate is not tied to his or her ethnic minority group membership, Turkish-Dutch participants distanced themselves from the Turkish in-group. In addition, the results for the feeling thermometer suggest that they also distanced themselves from other ethnic minority groups because participants viewed these groups more negatively under these conditions. Furthermore, there was not only evidence of distancing from the ethnic in-group but also of increased association with the higher status majority group. In a secure intergroup context, higher perceived permeability was related to higher Dutch identification (see also Guimond et al., 2002). Thus, when the Turkish-Dutch participants saw opportunities to be accepted in the Dutch majority group, they tended to dissociate themselves from the Turkish in-group and from other ethnic minority groups, and to associate themselves more with the Dutch. These results strongly support theorizing that in a secure intergroup structure with permeable group boundaries, members of low-status groups tend not to use strategies of in-group identification and social competition, but rather in-group disidentification and social mobility (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Taylor & McKirnan, 1984).

For the Turkish-Dutch participants, group permeability also had an independent main effect on the in-group evaluation for the status-relevant dimension. When the ethnic boundaries were considered as relatively open, the participants saw this dimension as less typical for the Turkish in-group. In a situation where individual mobility is possible, the low-status position of the Turkish group can be explained by an assumed lack of efficiency, perseverance, and achievement orientation.

It turned out that for the status-relevant dimension there was a further statistically significant interaction effect between stability and legitimacy. In a stable and legitimate context, out-group evaluation on this dimension was highest. In contrast, in an illegitimate context, increased stability was associated with less stereotyping of the Dutch out-group, and also with less positive general feelings

towards the Dutch. We suspect that illegitimate status differences brings the assumed higher typicality of the Dutch on the status-relevant dimension into question. In such a context, a more stable interethnic structure is not the result of the higher levels of efficiency, perseverance, and achievement orientation of the Dutch, but, for example, of existing power differences. This situation makes competitive social comparisons on the status-relevant dimension more likely, resulting in less stereotyping of the Dutch on the status-relevant dimension and less positive feelings towards the Dutch out-group.

The High-status Dutch

Following SIT, Dutch participants were expected to protect their status position to the extent that they regarded it as legitimate. When the higher status of one's group is seen as deserved or justifiable, people will be more likely to consider it worthy of protection. A legitimate high-status position justifies reactions to threat, for example, in the form of increased in-group orientation and in-group bias (e.g., Turner & Brown, 1978). This is precisely what the results for the Dutch participants show. Higher perceived legitimacy was independently associated with stronger in-group identification, more positive feelings towards the Dutch, and a lesser distinction between the in-group and the out-group on the status-irrelevant dimension.

In addition, the interaction between legitimacy and stability turned out to be significant for the status-relevant dimension and for the out-group feelings. In a legitimate context, higher stability was related to the Turkish out-group being considered less typical on this dimension and to more negative feelings towards ethnic minority out-groups in general. In an illegitimate context, stability was not related to both measures. These results are inconsistent with the idea that an unstable and illegitimate context is especially threatening for high-status group members. The results do, however, fit the idea of an assimilationist ideological position in which a stable and legitimate context provides intellectual and moral justification for negative out-group perceptions (Levin, Sidanius, Rabinowitz, & Federico, 1998; Sinclair, Sidanius, & Levin, 1999).

For the Dutch participants, permeability did not have any significant (interaction) effects. This corresponds with the results of a previous Dutch study (Verkuyten, 2005b), but differs from studies among dominant group members in other countries such as Australia (Johnson et al., 2005) and Spain (Echabe & Castro, 1996), and from experimental work (see Ellemers, 1993). The lack of effects for permeability suggest that the majority group is more concerned about the stability and legitimacy of intergroup relations than they are with the mobility of individual ethnic minority group members. The mean score for permeability was at the neutral mid-point of the scale and perceived security and insecurity of status relations play a more important role in the reactions of the Dutch. These findings may reflect the current situation in the Netherlands where the relations between "autochthonous" (ethnic Dutch) and "allochthonous" (ethnic minorities) have become more tense and problematic (see Scroggins, 2005; Verkuyten & Zaremba, 2005). In public discourse, the language of "us and them" predominates (Ter Wal, 2004), drawing people's attention and concern increasingly to group distinctions and group positions. For the ethnically Dutch, these concerns do not seem to be defused by beliefs in individual mobility.

Implications

The present findings have theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the findings support the social identity perspective on intergroup relations in a real-world context and among low- and high-status groups. Using multiple measures of identity management strategies and as implied by SIT, we

have focused on the interactive effects of stability, legitimacy, and permeability simultaneously. We found clear evidence of identity management among ethnic minority groups under conditions that should theoretically engender such motivations, and in an ideological context that can explain the reactions of the majority group. Hence, the study indicates important relationships between social structure and ideology, as has been proposed by social identity theorists (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1999). The way in which members of different status groups behave depends upon the perceived sociostructural characteristics together with the beliefs and norms that guide these behaviors.

Other findings add further weight to the social identity perspective, such as the stronger positive in-group differentiation of the ethnic Dutch, compared to the Turkish-Dutch participants, on the status-relevant dimension and on the feeling thermometer. These results are in agreement with other findings (e.g., Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Jackson, 2002) and indicate that high-status members tend to favor their own group more strongly in comparison to other groups than do low-status group members. Furthermore, in agreement with other findings, the Dutch showed no positive in-group differentiation on the status-irrelevant dimension that is seen as more typical of the Turks (Dagevos et al., 2003; Phalet et al., 2000). In fact, and similar to a previous study (Verkuyten, 2005b), the Dutch saw this dimension as more typical for the Turks. This is in line with the idea that group ratings are constrained by shared social definitions about which traits are characteristic for each group (see Ellemers, Van Rijswijk, Roefs, & Simons, 1997; Spears, Jetten, & Doosje, 2001).

Moreover, in agreement with SIT, the Turkish-Dutch showed stronger positive in-group differentiation on the status-irrelevant dimension and a less positive score on the feeling thermometer in relation to other ethnic minorities than in relation to the Dutch. They also had higher in-group identification than the Dutch participants. The Turkish-Dutch saw the intergroup structure as relatively stable, illegitimate, and impermeable. In such a situation and to counteract a negative social identity, they are motivated to stress their distinctive ethnic identity and to distance themselves from other minority groups.

There are also some practical implications. The fact that the perceived sociostructural characteristics accounted for substantial variance (between 14% and 39%) in the different measures points to their importance for understanding people's feelings and reactions. Their importance is further enhanced because broad and sometimes quite rapid political and economic changes are likely to affect perceptions of stability and legitimacy of the intergroup structure and permeability of group boundaries. For example, since 2001 there have been dramatic political changes in the Netherlands involving the rapid rise of a new-rightist populist movement, which has affected perceptions of the intergroup structure and interethnic relations more generally (Verkuyten & Zaremba, 2005). Systematic attention to the three sociostructural variables makes it, in principle, possible to predict and influence patterns of ethnic identification and interethnic relations.

Limitations

We want to mention two limitations to the current study. Because the study was correlational, the causal direction of the effects cannot be determined. It is possible that group identification and out-group stereotypes affect the perception of the intergroup structure. Stereotypes about low competence of minority groups can, for example, justify the status quo (Jost & Banaji, 1994). In addition, group identification could mediate or moderate some of the effects of the sociostructural variables on group perceptions and feelings (see Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999; Mummendey et al., 1999). However, the present analysis was theoretically driven and therefore, for example, we examined SIT's idea that individual mobility implies disidentification with the minority in-group and increased identification

with the majority group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Ellemers et al., 1988, 1990). Furthermore, many of the findings are similar to what experimental work has shown. Nevertheless, longitudinal data demonstrating that political and economic changes affect people's perceptions of the sociostructural variables, which, in turn, affect their ethnic identity management strategies would offer an important addition to the present findings. Second, the study was conducted with student participants. Hence, it can be argued that people with relatively high individual ability participated. On the one hand, this can be considered important because leaders of collective action often have more resources and abilities than other disadvantaged group members. On the other hand, however, the five-stage model (Taylor & McKirnan, 1984) argues that among low-status group members, group openness interacts with individual ability. Under the condition of group permeability, talented members of the low-status group will adopt the individual mobility strategy, whereas low-ability individuals will prefer collective action. Thus, our findings indicating individual mobility among the Turkish-Dutch students might be due to their relatively high ability level. Empirical research examining the interaction between openness and individual ability has, however, provided unsupportive results (e.g., Boen & Vanbeselaere, 1998, 2000; Wright et al., 1990). Rather, talented members seem to prefer individual mobility and non-talented members collective action, independently of permeability (see also Ellemers et al., 1988; Guimond et al., 2002). In contrast, our results indicate clear effects for permeability when the intergroup structure is perceived as secure. Because of the inconclusive results for individual ability, it will be valuable for future studies to consider this variable. This will allow us to examine whether individual ability plays a moderating role in the effects of the perceived sociostructural characteristics.

CONCLUSION

Identification and group evaluations are guided by ideas about the stability and legitimacy of intergroup relations, the nature of the group boundaries, and the particular ideological context. The three characteristics were found to interact in theoretically interpretable ways, supporting the social identity perspective. Perceived stability, legitimacy, and permeability are useful for understanding the conditions under which social mobility, creativity, or competition will occur. Together with political and ideological conditions, these characteristics offer the possibility for making a valid social psychological analysis of actual intergroup relations in society. A focus on cognitive and motivational processes is insufficient for an adequate understanding and for making a contribution to present-day debates on, for example, ethnic and cultural diversity and the role of ethnicity in society.

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